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AN APRICOT LUNCHEON.

By HESTER M. POOLE.

THIS is an era of individualization. Every woman has her fad; all functions are specialized. At a reception or a tea, as a distinct feature, is a solo singer, a player upon the piano, the harp or violin, or a reader from Browning. There are no more "all-round" entertainments. Even the table decorations are confined to a single flower with its relief of greenery, like a carnation, a rose of a single color, lilacs or white flowers and maiden-hair ferns. Each entertainment is a melody where rhythmic movements upon the same general theme weave sinuously as the braided waters of a transparent streamlet over their pebbly bottoms.

This modern feature of social life has its advantages. It proceeds upon the same principle that compels a workman, even an artist, to limit himself to a single avocation and make himself master of that. One set of men confine themselves to the manipulation of watch-springs, another to those tiny screws that keep the wheels and balances in place. Much is lost in a wide yet shallow acquaintance with various kinds of workmanship and much is gained in dexterity concentrated upon one certain point, and one alone.

Applied to the giving of dinners and luncheons, breakfasts and receptions the same tendencies are observed. Course dinners compel the cook to prepare and serve each *plat* in a style of perfection. Where several viands were served at once one or two failures might not be noticed. In the present custom it would be unpardonable if a single course were not up to the standard.

THE development of the specialty tends to refine the taste in all directions. Immaculate linen, hand-finished with drawn-work, hemstitching, embroidery or lace, is supplemented by a center-piece richly painted or decorated in one or another ingenious way. And this linen, over which my lady has expended a world of thought and care, very likely ruining her eyes while trying to conventionalize the similitude of roses and lilies that bloom and droop above it, only forms the groundwork for floral decorations and a show of eggshell china brought from the uttermost parts of the earth. In the execution of these—that is, both the floral ornamentation and the porcelain and cut glass—she specializes again.

For each month has its largest of floral wealth, the beauty of which can be accentuated by proper placing and environment, and also its proper fruitage, the colors of which may be made to blend or contrast with those of the flowers that bedeck it.

IN August apricots and blackberries are in prime. If the former fruit is past its first flush early peaches may take their place. In fact the same manner of treatment belongs to both fruits. The habit of specializing will cause my lady to suit her flowers and her fruits to each other, and both to the season. For her early August luncheon, therefore, she mingles the apricot, the nectarine, the peach and the blackberry, and enwreaths them with the yellow nasturtium.

In the first place, be she either the denizen of the city or the happy owner of a country cot-

tage, my lady has already grown herself a bower of shade and beauty. Its base is a piazza either at the side or rear, broad and long as her hospitality. The one in mind, within twenty-five miles of New York, is thirteen feet by fifteen. Built in the rear of the sitting-room, from which it is accessible, it is near a rose-shaded corner, from which the cottage takes its name, "Rose-Corner Cottage." It is only two years old, this veranda, on which merry feet have often danced to the music of piano or guitar, but it is already covered with a riot of lush wandering vines. Here are royal grapes, rank and rich, with trailing bunches of empurpling fruit, and leaves whispering back to the wooing of the oriole that, perched upon the neighboring elm, sings his heart out upon the quivering air. Here are rose vines climbing up to my lady's window, overlooking this charming scene and eager to pour their incense at her feet. Here is the passion vine, with its starry flowers, and the clematis, all making a riotous growth, through whose cool, graceful arches are caught vista beyond vista melting into the blue hills of the Orange Mountain in the dreamy distance.

WHILE my lady craves social life and delights in dainty feasts, she neither can nor will provide hearty and heavy dinners. These luncheons, two or three a month, given to a few choice spirits "cribbed, combined and confined" in the heated metropolis, are appetizing, yet simple. Those of August are the lightest of all the year.

On low dishes, one near each angle of the table, are heaped the apricot, the nectarine or the peach, surrounded by a fotsam of big, shiny, ripe blackberries. In the center of the table is a large, low crystal dish, from which trails sprays of the yellow and orange nasturtium. These two varieties of the tall, old-fashioned flower are not novelties, but in this place are far more decorative than the dwarf nasturtium. They are so arranged that while the main stems are in the water, the tapering ends stream out toward and between the places where guests and hostess are seated. With these sprays and the luscious, highly colored and contrasted fruits, the table is almost covered.

Not with hot soup, but with cool, spicy salad, is luncheon begun. With the tender, light green heart of lettuce, on each leaf of which repose three small nasturtium leaves and one blossom, is served French dressing, and there are sliced tomatoes on a separate plate for those who desire. I said hot soup was lacking, but there was clam broth for those who like something warm to begin with. Once my lady served orange soup, more for the delicate flavor and the color than for its nutrition.

FOLLOWING it came creamed chicken, with rice croquettes garnished with sprays of nasturtium, sliced broiled tomatoes with cream sauce, and French peas with whole wheat germs. After the salad was passed salted almonds, while olives and bread sticks were in evidence. Once, after Little Neck clams, she served salmon, with cucumbers and an omelet, and once lobster Newburg took its place, with potato croquettes and cauliflower. There was no plethora of viands, while each was nicely prepared and served with noiseless daintiness.

In dessert both eye and palate were gratified. Around a dish of molded farina, ice cold, had been poured whipped cream incorporated with apricots that had been stewed and mashed through a sieve. The mold itself was em-

broided in geometrical devices by inserting in its surface the stem ends of large, ripe blackberries, while the great platter was edged with the halves of high-colored apricots and nectarines. The whole made a dish most suitable for midsummer, while it was a delight to the artistic sense. Of course there was also blackberry jelly wafers and cheese, while coffee was served both warm and iced. As nothing need be cooked the day of the luncheon, save the chicken and the croquettes, and as even the latter could be prepared the day previously and set in the refrigerator until shortly before luncheon, a single domestic, with my lady's help, suffices to cook and serve this antidote to "midsummer madness."

THE ices, where were they? My lady could hardly decide upon one variety of shape where so many suggested themselves to her fertile mind. Once there were huge individual apricots in the center of which reposed half a dozen large blackberries. Again she had peach ices and no cream.

By the way, ices and creams are by the help of the latest improvements in freezers easily concocted at home in half an hour. Made from or with the fresh fruit they are simply delectable. The whites of eggs beaten with the crushed fruit (after it is pressed through a coarse wire sieve) and sweetened to taste is put into the freezer. After twenty minutes' manipulation it is turned out upon a crystal platter, nectar and ambrosia in one. Here is incarnated not only the flavor of the fresh fruit, out an incomparable richness that to many is less objectionable in its after effects than is ice cream.

AS a change in a blackberry and apricot luncheon the fruit may be sprinkled with sugar and arranged in concentric circles, alternating with circles of the halves of apricots, nectarines or peaches. In the center and around the whole may be a ring of whipped and sweetened cream. The object is to preserve the contrast of color and of flavor so that the decorations of the lunch table shall be altogether satisfying. A blackberry and a peach shortcake is neither unwholesome nor to be despised on the score of taste. A section of each may be served at the same time, smothered in whipped cream. And no other dish is better fitted to soothe the savage breast of the city dweller, exasperated with the heat of the fiery pavements from which he has just escaped.

DECORATIVE NOTES.

IN cream linen some lovely cushions are embroidered in scrolls, with shaded olive greens, and finished with a bow in one of the corners of pale olive ribbon, lined with a cream ribbon of the same width. We have seen a cushion of yellow linen on which was embroidered, in outline, a pattern of large marshmallow flowers, and among the flowers were scattered small arrowheads solidly worked. The embroidery was in white. Needlewomen turn for subjects to lilies, golden-rod, fleur-de-lis and any other blossoms rich in color. Rose-colored linen, with Dresden pattern of tiny bouquets worked solidly, makes a charming cushion. The Agra linens are also desirable, and these linen covers wash forever. Painting on linen gives a rich field for decoration, and cushion covers of painted linen may be washed if care is taken in the process.

EVEN the cheaper grades of garden hose are well and carefully made, every one giving satisfactory results in the service for which it is intended. There are besides two brands of garden hose, which are worthy of special notice, viz.: "Gulf Stream" and "Staple." The fabric of each of these brands is made from carefully selected long fiber cotton, heavily and closely woven. The rubber lining is of the best quality and made under the well-known "precaution" plan followed by the New Jersey Car Spring and Rubber Company in the manufacture of all their hose linings. This consists in running the tube in three or more plies so that, in case of any defect or imperfection in one layer, it is remedied by the other plies.

When so desired, all hose will be armored to prevent abrasion or other injury which might otherwise occur in situations where subjected to rough usage or careless handling.

Brass nozzles, couplings, sprinklers, and other necessary fittings are also carried in stock by the company, and may be procured at short notice. The entire line of such goods are of the latest and most approved design and of superior finish and appearance.

BRASS-MOUNTED chests, with elaborately wrought lock plates and hinges are in vogue for keeping table and bed linen. In general appearance they are copied from the old German chests that are made to contain the bride's trousseau as she leaves the home of her childhood for another as old and quaint. The largest are some four feet long and four high, and are so rich and massive as to suggest old feudal castles and dungeons. Yet these chests are really made out of modern oak, made to appear as antiques. Within they are handsomely finished and some have two or three ways to separate the different classes of articles. At the bottom are smoothly-laid linen sheets, with wide hems above a row of hemstitching at the top. In one corner of each is the inevitable monogram wrought by the owner's dainty fingers, and often devised by her; at least, she has a stencil cut with the initial or the monogram, or rather two, since one is small for napkins and towels, the other, some nine inches in length, for tablecloths and sheets. These are wrought diagonally with the edges. Fine linen is used in embroidering sheets, and either linen or Asiatic silk upon tablecloths and napkins. Upon them are expended much delicate tracery and finished work.

PILLOW and bolster slips are also wrought near the hem. In size the monogram ranges between that for the sheet and for the napkins. The hemstitch is always in evidence. On all linen, except for the table, where the house mistress can attend to the work, hemstitching is thought to be the only really delicate manner in which to finish linen. An edging of lace may or may not be added to the broad hem. In laundering it is apt, after a while, to rip and tear, to the annoyance of the mistress. Anything divested of trimming that has once been a portion of it seems worn out, though it may really be as good as ever. A set of linen ought to last a long lifetime, certainly when carefully laundered. Where soda and washing fluids are used the fiber rots as well as turns yellow.

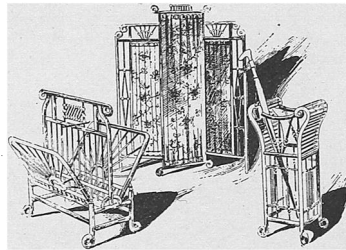
In the upper tray of the linen chest go napkins above the tablecloths. These must be abundant in quantity, fine in quality and of various sizes. And my lady never fails to look out for broken lots often sold in shops at a great reduction in price.

MORE and more is it the fashion to emancipate one's self and one's family from conventional life during the dog days and flee from the shore or the mountain. How many of us remember, in such jaunts, taking a thousand things we did not need and leaving behind the thousand things we did.

In the first place, if we are sensible, we shall leave behind us all sorts of gew-gaws and fripperies. We need frocks of outing and flannel, not of satin. These should be made with the abbreviated skirts, not too full, and with blouse waists. The plainness of the latter may be relieved by trimmings of richer color. Navy blue will be found the best wearing tint for rough climbing and boating. On dark days for home wear fuchsia, with bows, red or yellow, will give sufficient adornment.

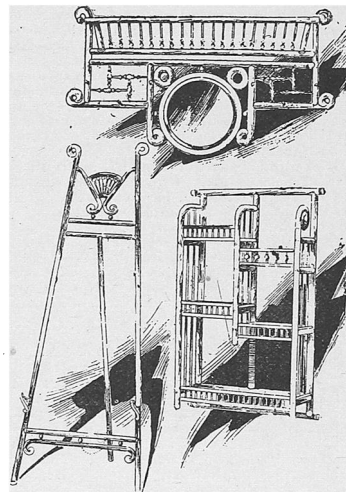
Bandana handkerchiefs are suitable coverings for cottage lounge pillows, also the denims. It is only just beginning to be known that denims are now made in all the various leading tints. At the seashore these covers are to be wrought in the similitude of pine cones in diagonal corners and in the periwinkle shell for the mountain.

IN arranging for mid-summer heats long, heavy, thick draperies are to be banished to moth-proof receptacles, and as much as possible is upholstered furniture to be dispensed with. Willow, rattan and bamboo are almost indispensable. Their dark cushions of plush or corduroy need an extra covering of gray



Screen, Paper Rack and Umbrella Stand.

striped linen, while sofas and lounges are swathed in the same cool-looking material. In summer time, too, tidies, throws and bric-a-brac are best put out of sight. The fewer articles in a room the freer passage for the air. It gives a feeling of relief, also, to change the position of the chief pieces of furniture. Place the lounge cornerwise out from the corner of the room, away from the wall, where the breezes can blow all around it. Banish red, if possible, and in its place introduce gray-greens and blues. On days of almost unbearable sultriness connecting rooms may be cooled by hanging in the doorway between them an old linen sheet wrung out of cold water. An occasional dipping of the sheet in ice water will yield the moisture sorely needed in a dry, overheated day, while the temperature of both rooms will be decreased a number of degrees. A hammock slung across a corner or between two windows will make an excellent bed on a sultry night. Did we subject ourselves to fresh air as we ought no catarrhs would be the result.



Hanging Hat Rack, Wall Cabinet and Easel.

IN a Japanese room, hung with Japanese paper, on which disport all sorts of impossible birds and dragons, a handsome frieze is one made of a narrow Japanese grille over a plain paper. That is, if the wall paper is the deep lacquer red

and gold, the grille may be placed over a solid lacquer red paper frieze, or one of dead gold. In a dining-room a wider grille over corresponding paper will make a suitable dado. The ceiling should be covered with parallelograms of fine matting, divided from each other by strips of narrow, unstained flatwood. An indispensable adjunct is a screen. In this scheme of color it should be heavy raised gold embroidery upon a black background, since if red that color would be too much in evidence. Of all nations the Japanese are sufficiently artistic to use the richest and most brilliant of colors, yet without the effect of gaudiness. My lady has found that few colors are used by them in the same scheme, and thereby takes warning. Her apartment is no incongruous jumble of green and blue, red and yellow. One color, just like one musical harmony, dominates each room, but not one shade or tint. If it be yellow, for instance, various tones, like varying chords, are seen on floor, hall and ceiling. The rug is darkest, being a dull, deep reddish brown, with small, indeterminate figures in amber and Indian red. The walls are a mellow light brown, with a frieze repeating the rug colors a good deal dulled. The ceiling is hardly more than a cream, while the furniture covers show the various tones of yellow, from deep golden brown to cream. The latter is seen in the figures and in single plush covered chairs, never in a background for darker figures. A little dull orange is found in trimmings and sofa cushions. Of course this is a north room, needing all the light that can be centered here. Yellow simulates sunshine and gathers and reflects light, instead of absorbing it.

FANCY FURNISHINGS.

THIS is undoubtedly an age of novelties, and the furnishing trade, as a whole, affords such scope for the exercise of inventive genius that there is no great reason to be surprised that it should be constantly productive of fresh ideas. Our American manufacturers have done much of late years in the origination of useful contrivances calculated to contribute to the comfort of a home, and as they possess remarkable facilities for their production, in the way of hardwoods and machinery for their manipulation, it is only natural that they should cater for the trade of countries outside their own. To this end they produce a line of fancy goods, such as book racks, hat racks, screens, hanging brackets, cabinets, cornice poles, portiere rods, newspaper racks, desks, curtain rods and other goods, in forms which are popular on the other side of the Atlantic as they are here.

As may be judged from our illustrations, the goods referred to, while thoroughly strong and trustworthy, are very light and portable, and the fact that they can be packed in a very small space is an important one where the question of freight is concerned.

It is not easy to select representative articles from among so many for the illustration of a brief notice of this description, but we have sketched just a few and reproduce them here-with to elucidate our remarks, which are manufactured by a well-known firm of this city. In the first group are a screen, umbrella stand and music rack, of a characteristic type. The good qualities of the screen will be seen at a glance. The folding arrangement is an admirable one, and the framework is at the same time light, strong and graceful. These are, of course, made in various sizes, and as all the parts are turned and otherwise manipulated by machinery—not bent—the variety of shapes possible is practically endless. There are single, twofold and threefold, to suit various requirements. The umbrella stand and music rack are effective knock-knacks, which would be welcome in many a hall or music room. The hanging bookshelves, easel and hat rack constituting the second group come from the same source, and are snapped up by buyers as quickly as they can be brought over. Their lightness does not in any way detract from their durability, and, as for appearance, they are as cleanly finished as the most fastidious purchaser could desire.

While many purchasers wish to procure some articles with which to fill odd corners, they are debarred from doing so by the question of expense. With such goods as these, however, that difficulty is removed, and a good deal of effect is obtained with but small outlay.